

## Outstanding exercise support

*(Editor's note: The following letter was sent to Col. Doug Richardson, 48th Fighter Wing commander, from Air Commodore Andrew Vallance, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe special weapons branch chief, following an exercise sponsored by the 48th Fighter Wing Jan. 27 - 30.)*

Dear Colonel Richardson,

I write to express my most sincere and grateful thanks for all the help provided by you and your people during the recent dual-capable aircraft inter-regional deployment command post exercise at (RAF) Lakenheath. We could not have received a warmer or more positive reception, nor hoped for better support and service.

In particular, I would like to

thank your vice (wing) commander, Col. Steve Paladini, for being such a gracious and entertaining host at the command post exercise dinner and also Col. Norman Seip (48th Operation Group commander) for taking time off from his "missionary" work with the local population to join us either side of the dinner. However, my most full-hearted praise must go to Lt. Col. Bob Lemmon (48th FW plans) and Capt. Lisa Eastland (48th FW readiness) for their splendid organization and administration. Everything went off without a hitch, and nothing was too much trouble for them. They were a great team and played a key role in the success of the command post exercise.

It would be remiss of me not to mention how impressed we were with the wing. One can generally sense within a few minutes of arriving at a base whether the unit is good, bad or indifferent. All of us very quickly realized that the 48th was a most strongly motivated and highly professional outfit. That was reconfirmed by everything we saw at Lakenheath and left us all with a most favorable impression. I know the fact that the 48th is a splendid unit will come as no surprise to you, but I thought you would wish to know that its professional excellence shines forth for all to see.

Again, many thanks for all the excellent support we received.

## Action Lines

The Action Line is your direct link to me for complaints, suggestions or comments. It's not intended to replace the chain of command. When normal command and agency channels haven't been able to resolve your concerns, call (Ext. 2324), fax (Ext. 5367), e-mail (Action\_Line), distribution (48 FW/PA), mail (48 FW/PA, Unit 5210 Box 215 APO AE 09464-0215), or hand carry your Action Line to the public affairs office (Bldg. 1085). You may remain anonymous; however, to receive a reply, leave your name, unit, duty or home phone number and full APO mailing address. Names will be kept confidential.



48th Fighter Wing commander

## Walking in a human-relations minefield

By Maj. James Pierson  
Social actions

There are some who feel the changing nature of human relations is a minefield

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<http://www.lakenheath.af.mil/jet48.htm>

### On the cover

Photo by SSgt. Steve Ball

**TSgt. Lee Jenks, president of the Liberty Wing Archery Club, takes aim at one of the club's three-dimensional targets. For more on the Liberty Archers, see page 13.**

where sooner or later they are bound to take the wrong step or say the wrong thing. But that doesn't have to be the case.

By assessing and controlling the way you communicate, you can greatly reduce the possibility of becoming a casualty.

In order to perform well in the Air Force's diverse environment, most people need to become better at the art of communicating. Communication is not a simple act of sending and receiving information. It involves content, context, tone of voice and non-verbals.

Think about the way you talk, the language you use and how you use it. The words we use have a great impact on how we get along or don't get along with others. Since what you mean and how you're perceived may be two different things in the "language minefield," you need to be thoughtful in how you express yourself. The things you say and the way you say them can have unintended results.

Try adopting respectful language for everyone you talk to. Use the same type of language with peers and subordinates that you would use with your superiors or an official visitor to the section. By all means be liberal with "please" and "thank you." Put yourself in the other person's shoes.

Do you want people to speak to you as an adult or a child? Do you enjoy discourteous, abrupt customer service? How do you feel when you are asked pleasantly vs. gruffly to do something?

Avoid disparaging or abusive language that degrades a person's character or

physical attributes. Many words and expressions we use without thinking can cause hurt feelings, suspicion, distrust and anger. Disparaging and abusive language creates communication problems because it is emotionally provocative. A person might take the message out of context, fail to hear the complete message, or take offense when none was intended. While cursing doesn't offend everyone, it does offend some, and it is easy to remove from one's speech. Really, swearing relieves us of the trouble of finding more clever words to express our feelings.

Also, if you feel the need to speak your opinion on a sensitive issue, learn to do it diplomatically — be truthful as well as sensitive.

Consider occasionally the old advice to "bite your tongue," as you may find it much easier to live with people by being silent rather than spouting off. Remain aware of what language is disparaging or abusive and don't use it.

Avoid the dangers of the human-relations minefield. Start learning to listen; learning to respect differences; testing your understanding (clarifying those perceptions) and communicating clearly and fairly to everyone. Use words to the advantage, instead of to the detriment, of yourself and your coworkers.

Of course, listeners have some responsibilities, too, but that's another article. (Rhonda Aubin-Smith from social actions also contributed to this article.)